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McNAMARA DEFENDS U.S. SPY SYSTEM

Rips Charge of Cuba Failure

BY JOSEPH HEARST

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, March 11—A

congressman's charge that the Cuban missile buildup confronted this nation with "probably the greatest intelligence failure since Pearl Harbor" brought an angry denial from Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

This was disclosed today when secret testimony taken by the House Armed Services committee was released. The charge was made by Rep. Frank C. Osmers, Jr., (R., N. J.).

Ready to Blast U. S.

Osmers said the testimony was that the big Russian rockets were moved across the continent "that we didn't know anything about it until a couple of days before they were ready to blow up half the country."

"All we know is that when this matter was handed to the President of the United States he had hours to go," Osmers asserted.

The congressman said there were three areas in which to place the blame:

1. A criminal conspiracy of some kind on the part of the intelligence community.
2. A massive effort on the part of the President and his cabinet to mislead Congress and the people because of the lack of timely action.

Disservice to Nation

3. An intelligence community that is grossly incompetent and inadequate.

McNamara retorted that during the McCarthy era the community as it has been damaged.

"This morning, without knowing more about it and without being able to suggest a positive program that will improve the situation, I think is doing our country a disservice."

The secretary said he doesn't believe we have a perfect system of intelligence collection with respect to what is going on in the closed society of any communist bloc nation, but that Osmers' charges are "a completely erroneous interpretation."

Charges Are Violent

McNamara said the subject Osmers raised "is so important, his charges so violent," that it would be appropriate for "certain select members of the committee, who would be properly cleared, to discuss the matter at greater length."

The secretary said he was limited in his ability to discuss the steps that were taken and the reports that were received, "because I think that to do so would destroy the security of some we have."

Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D., La.), asked "where would we be?" if there was a revolt in Cuba and Russia deployed troops to the island as they did in Hungary in the 1956 revolt there.

"Wouldn't that be really an invasion by a European power in this hemisphere?" asked Hebert.

"I would interpret it as an invasion," replied McNamara.

"That is important, I think," Hebert went on. "We have not written Cuba off, have we?"

"We certainly have not," McNamara replied.

The secretary said there are possibly several hundred missiles, a large number of them more than 30-feet in length, stored in caves in Cuba. He reiterated his earlier expressed belief that all offensive missiles have been removed.

McNamara said there was absolutely no deal with Russia to remove missiles from Cuba. He said the United States would take

its missiles out of Turkey and Italy.

Asked if he considered ground inspection in Cuba no longer necessary, the secretary said he wouldn't say that it is not necessary, but that "the sources of intelligence now open we might expect under certain international control."